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INFO: POL ECON AMBU AMBO DCM SCI DAO

DISSEMINATION: UNESCO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:DTKILLION
DRAFTED: POL:EGOFF
CLEARED: DCM:SCENGELKEN

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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR IO/MPR LISA SPRATT

E.O. 12598: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNESCO'S 35TH GENERAL CONFERENCE: PROGRAM AND EXTERNAL
RELATIONS COMMISSION (PRX) SESSIONS

¶1. Summary: Program and External Relations Committee (PRX) meetings
October 9-13 held the line on the budget and rejected constitutional
changes suggested by outgoing General Conference President George

Anastassopoulos. Two minor draft resolutions were approved. End
Summary.

¶2. The Program and External Relations Committee (PRX) of UNESCO's
35th General Conference met October 9-13. Its work was structured
around eight separate debates on program support, external relations
and a variety of general questions. Mr. Mohammad Zahir Aziz
(Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to UNESCO) was appointed
Chairperson of the PRX.

¶3. Items of note included: a report on the UNESCO Institute for
Statistics (UIS); a proposed procedure for consideration by the
General Conference regarding the Draft Medium Term Strategies;
implementation of 33 C/Resolution 92 (Relations between the three
organs of UNESCO); a report by the President of the 34th General
Conference which contained proposals for reforming the organization
of work of the General Conference and the Executive Board; UNESCO's
Participation Program and Fellowships Program; and proposals for the
celebration of anniversaries in 2010-2011 with which UNESCO could be
associated.

¶4. Largely due to the positive tenor and atmosphere set by the
Afghan Chair, debate in the PRX was cordial. The PRX examined four
draft resolutions (DRs) for amendment of the Draft Program and
Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5). The Chair drew attention to the
Director-General's position on each. The Director-General's
recommendations regarding the adoption of each were followed. In
the end, three of the four budgetary DR's were withdrawn (originally
proposed by Burkina Faso, Argentina, and Nigeria), and the DR from
Azerbaijan was adopted with one amendment that followed the DG's
observations. The Azerbaijani DR (35 C/DR.64) encourages National
Commissions and NGOs with official relations with UNESCO to increase
their involvement with the Organization.

¶5. The PRX also adopted a DR put forward by Venezuela and supported
by eight Latin American countries and Spain (Argentina, Bolivia,
Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Spain)
entitled "Celebration of the bicentenary of the independence
processes of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean."
Discussion surrounding this item supported its intent to invite the
Director-General to consult with Member States in the region with a
view to having UNESCO celebrate the bicentenary in 2010. The U.S.
Delegation intervened and received assurances from the Assistant
Director-General for External Relations that this item did not have

any budgetary implications.

¶16. Item 1.6, Organization of the Work of the Session and Report by the President of the 34th Session of the General Conference, provided some of the more lively debate in the PRX. George Anastassopoulos, President of the 34th General Conference and Greek Permanent Representative to UNESCO, presented his observations and recommendations for a new division of labor between the Executive Board and the General Conference. While the report contained some recommendations with which the U.S. delegation could agree, the U.S. could not agree with the broad substance of the report. U.S. views were shared by most other delegations and in the end, the PRX simply took note of the report.

¶17. Comment. Debate and discussion in the PRX was largely anodyne. The Swedish Delegation proved to be the most outspoken with regard to effective use of resources and spoke out strongly against the Fellowship and Participation program. Ambassador Anastassopoulos, who acted as if he were continuing in his former capacity as President of the General Conference, took great offense with those delegations that did not wholeheartedly embrace his report. The Anastassopoulos report will not likely surface again.
End Comment.
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